

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) POLICY

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

- (1) This Policy establishes the College's commitment to a consistent, equitable and transparent framework for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for the purposes of admission and/or credit transfer.
- (2) This Policy complies with the requirements of the:
 - a. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); and
 - b. the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

Scope

- (3) This Policy applies to all:
 - a. courses at ACPE; and
 - b. articulation agreements.

Section 2 – Definitions

- (4) In this Policy:
 - a. **Advanced Standing** is a form of credit for any previous learning. See also Articulation arrangements, Credit transfer, and Recognition of Prior Learning
 - b. **Applicant** is an individual who is making an application for RPL under this Policy. (An applicant may be a student or may be seeking admission into the College.)
 - c. **AQF** means the Australian Qualifications Framework. An AQF qualification is the result of an accredited complete program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF.
 - d. **Articulation** is a process that enables students to progress from a completed Award to another Award with predetermined admission and/or Credit arrangements. Articulation is formalised by an approved institutional agreement.
 - e. **Award** is the qualification resulting from successful completion of a specific course.
 - f. **Block Credit** means credit granted towards entire stages or components of a course.
 - g. **Course** means the entire program of study that spans several years and is made up of multiple units.
 - h. **Credit** is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and Learning Outcomes between different types of learning and/or Awards. Credit

may reduce the volume of learning required to achieve a qualification.

- i. **Credit transfer** is a process that provides students with consistent Credit outcomes for units, components or entire stages of a course based on identified equivalence in content and Learning Outcomes.
- j. **Formal Learning** means learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification (*AQF Glossary of Terminology*).
- k. **Informal Learning** means learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike Formal or Non-Formal Learning, Informal Learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. (*AQF Glossary of Terminology*).
- l. **Learning Outcomes** means the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning (*AQF Glossary of Terminology*).
- m. **Level:** the level of an Award reflects the relative complexity and/or depth of its program Learning Outcomes, and is expressed according to the various AQF levels (*AQF Glossary of Terminology*). The level at which a unit is taught indicates the amount of prior knowledge required to study it successfully.
- n. **Non-formal Learning** means learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification (*AQF Glossary of Terminology*).
- o. **Prior Learning** means learning that is Formal, Informal and/or Non-Formal and which is evidenced, current and relevant, and has taken place:
 - outside of the College; and/or
 - within a completed or incomplete College Award.
- p. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is a process that involves assessing an individual's relevant Prior Learning (including Formal, Informal and Non-Formal learning) to determine eligibility for admission to an Award and/or the granting of Credit.
- q. **Specified Credit** is Credit granted towards specific units or components of a course.
- r. **Student** means is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College's documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.
- s. **Subject** refers to a 15 – 16 week unit of study centred around a specific theme or topic.
- t. **Unspecified Credit** is Credit granted towards elective components or components at a particular level of a course. Unspecified Credit may be granted with, or without, subject area designation.
- u. **Undergraduate Course** at the College means any higher education course offered at levels 5 to 7 on the AQF. The following higher education courses are considered to be undergraduate by the College:

- Diploma (Level 5)
 - Undergraduate Certificates (TEQSA noted Level 6)
 - Associate Degree (Level 6)
 - Advanced Diploma (Level 6)
 - Bachelor Degree (Level 7)
 - Graduate Certificate (Level 8)
 - Graduate Diploma (Level 8)
- v. **Unit** means the smallest stand-alone component of an Award course for which a grade is assigned. (An accredited unit has been accredited by the same process as for a whole AQF qualification.)
- w. **Volume of Learning** is a measure which identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the Learning Outcomes specified for a course. Volume of Learning is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

Section 3 – Policy Statement

Principles

- (5) The overarching principle of this Policy is to preserve the integrity of the College's awards while facilitating an applicant's access to admission and credit transfer based on learning already undertaken (including Formal, Informal and Non-formal Learning).
- (6) Within this principle, the College endeavours to:
- a. support mobility between institutions and progression through levels of qualifications;
 - b. support an individual's lifelong learning goals by recognising Prior Learning and experiences;
 - c. ensure consistency and transparency in the offering of admission and granting of credit transfer; and
 - d. establish a framework for credit transfer arrangements in formal Articulation agreements with other institutions.
- (7) The College will assess Prior Learning for the purpose of granting Credit towards an Award, provided that the Prior Learning is **current** and **relevant** to the Learning Outcomes of the Award.
- (8) The College's assessment of Prior Learning for the purposes of admission and/or credit transfer will be evidence-based, equitable and academically defensible (HESF Threshold Standards Domain 1). Note also:
- a. the precise nature of the evidence-based assessment may vary from discipline to discipline;
 - b. the College will make its assessments on the merits of each individual case; and

- c. the College may, at its discretion, set additional requirements for RPL, including testing, interviews and portfolio submission.
- (9) The College reserves the right to charge a service fee for the purpose of assessing RPL.
- (10) Previous learning can only be recognised once in an ACPE course; that is, previous learning deemed equivalent to a unit cannot be used again for credit towards another unit in the same course.

Currency

- (11) Prior Learning that has been attained within **ten years** of the year of application will generally be considered current.
- a. Any changes to this timeframe will be considered by Academic Board.
- (12) Applications may not be approved in those disciplines where:
- a. the body of knowledge and practice has changed significantly; and/or
 - b. it is governed by regulatory or professional body requirements, AND
 - c. the applicant has not maintained an appropriate level of practice within the field of study.

Relevancy

- (13) Prior Learning will be considered **relevant** where:
- a. there is evidence to demonstrate that the applicant has achieved a quality and standard of learning equivalent to higher education studies;
 - b. the Prior Learning is of an appropriate Level; and
 - c. the Prior Learning is assessed as equivalent in discipline content, depth and breadth to a unit of study, an area of study, or a whole stage of a course offered by the College.

CREDIT TRANSFER

Types of Credit

- (14) Recognition of Prior Learning means credit towards a course in consideration of the individual's Prior Learning as assessed by the College. The advanced standing is expressed as credit points granted towards the Award course.
- (15) Recognition of Prior Learning may be granted as block, specified credit, or unspecified credit:
- a. **Block credit**, where the applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as meeting the stated Learning Outcomes for a whole stage or component of their course. Block Credit may be used towards satisfying specific requirements, including

entire stages, of a course. Block credit would usually reduce the required volume of learning for a course.

- b. **Specified credit** where the applicant's Prior Learning is assessed as meeting the stated Learning Outcomes for a unit or units of study in their course. Specified Credit may be used towards satisfying the specific requirements, including required units, of a course.
- c. **Unspecified credit** where the Prior Learning is assessed as being at an appropriate level and standard for a component of the course and may count towards a course subject area but are not linked to specific units of study. Unspecified credit can be used towards satisfying the elective components of a course.

Credit for Formal Learning

- (16) Credit for Formal Learning involves the College assessing whether the applicant's previous studies at a higher education institution are equivalent to the Learning Outcomes required for unit/s of study leading to a higher education qualification from the College.
- (17) Examples of credit for Formal Learning between ACPE Awards may include:
 - a. Internal credit transfer (where a student moves from one ACPE course to another ACPE course) will automatically be recognised where the unit code, title and credit point value are equivalent in both courses.
- (18) When changes to an accredited course results in changes to the ACPE course structure, the College will follow the transition plan that is approved by the regulatory body for granting advanced standing towards an Award.

Credit for Non-Formal and Informal Learning

- (19) Credit for Non-Formal Learning or Informal Learning involves the College assessing whether the applicant's skills and knowledge, acquired through work, life experience and/or learning where there are no formal or current qualifications as proof, which may be used to grant credit in a unit of study.
- (20) Credit will be available only where it is suitable and appropriate to a specific award course and only where a student's Non-formal or Informal Learning is assessed as having met the Learning Outcomes required for satisfactory completion of a particular unit or units of study within the relevant course.

Cross – Institutional Studies

- (21) Students may apply for credit for cross-institutional studies whereby they complete one or more units at another higher education institution while enrolled at the College with the aim of having the unit/s credited toward their currently-enrolled ACPE course.
- (22) Cross-institutional study must be approved by the relevant Head of Department prior to enrolment in the other institution.

Credit for Vocational Education and Training (VET) Studies

- (23) To determine credit for VET studies, the College conducts a mapping analysis comparing the VET qualification obtained from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), or units of competency from a VET qualification, to the Learning Outcomes and units of the College's higher education qualification.
 - a. This process identifies whether the VET qualification meets the College's criteria of a minimum 80% similarity in content, duration of study and degree of difficulty and conversely identifies 'gaps' in knowledge and skill.
- (24) To maintain the Course's integrity and consistency with the requirements of the AQF for that level of study, the College will not grant credit for studies undertaken at a level lower than AQF Diploma level (AQF Level 5).

CREDIT LIMITATIONS AND MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- (25) A student must complete a minimum of the equivalent of fifty percent (50%) of the course in order to qualify for a College award, notwithstanding any credit granted on the basis of Formal, Non-formal or Informal learning.
 - a. It is normally expected that students applying for credit will complete at least 50% of the final year of the course.

Note: These requirements may be varied where the work was completed as part of an Award course approved by the College in an approved conjoint venture with another institution.
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- (26) Students who have completed a standalone course or embedded course at ACPE will be granted 100% credit for equivalent units in a course.
- (27) The maximum amount of advanced standing granted for Non-formal or Informal Learning towards a course is twenty-five percent (25%).
- (28) Where approval of a course is dependent on meeting regulatory or professional body requirements regarding quality, content and/or delivery mode, the College

reserves the right to uphold these requirements by limiting conferral of advanced standing.

Minimum Requirements

- (29) The stated minimum requirements prescribe the maximum amounts of Credit Transfer possible through RPL.
- a. The minimum requirement amounts must be unique to the Award, having not been used towards another Award.
- (30) The minimum requirements and their application are shown on the table below:

ACPE Award Length	Minimum requirement	Application
4 years Full Time	The student must complete a minimum of the equivalent of 2 years full time of the award at ACPE	Student must complete at least 96 credit points at ACPE
3 years Full Time	The student must complete a minimum of the equivalent of 1.5 years full time of the award at ACPE	Student must complete at least 72 credit points of the award at ACPE
2 years Full Time	The student must complete a minimum of the equivalent of 1 year full time of the award at ACPE	Student must complete at least 48 credit points of the award at ACPE
1 year Full Time	The student must complete a minimum of the equivalent of 1 semester full time of the award at ACPE	Student must complete at least 24 credit points of the award at ACPE

- (31) Credit will be granted at lower levels first and the majority of the credit will be applied at the 100 level.
- (32) Articulation agreements negotiated between ACPE and other organisations for credit for students towards AQF qualifications at any level will take into account the comparability and equivalence of the:
- a. Learning Outcomes;
 - b. volume of learning;
 - c. course , including content; and
 - d. learning and assessment approaches.
- (33) When setting credit limits for a student with an AQF qualification towards a higher level AQF qualification in the same or related discipline, the College will take into account the relevant points above and the AQF guidelines below:
- a. 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3 year Bachelor Degree;

- b. 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4 year Bachelor Degree;
- c. 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3 year Bachelor Degree; and
- d. 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4 year Bachelor Degree.

Source: *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) January 2013 (2nd Edition)*

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- (34) The College will safeguard the quality of its Awards by ensuring that:
- a. The assessment of Prior Learning for admission to an Award is evidence-based and questions the applicant's competency and readiness for tertiary study.
 - b. The assessment of Prior Learning for Credit Transfer is evidence-based, and ensures that the Learning Outcomes have been met.
 - c. Credit on the basis of Formal Learning is only granted for completed units where the final grade is a Pass, or equivalent grade, and higher. Grades of 'concessional pass', 'terminating pass' or equivalent, from another higher education institution will not be deemed to be successful completion for the purpose of credit, unless supported by additional information and approved on a case-by-case basis.
 - d. Credit granted by another institution on the basis of Prior Learning is not transferable to ACPE.
 - e. Standards for the assessment of Prior Learning are regularly reviewed and monitored by the Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board.
- (35) Regardless of the nature or amount of advanced standing recognised, any specific requirements of an Award course must be fulfilled, including conditions associated with the professional recognition of the Award (for example, online study restrictions or a requirement to complete a certain number of practical hours).

APPEAL

- (36) A student may appeal a decision regarding the assessment of Prior Learning for the purpose of admission and / or credit transfer.
- (37) Grounds for an appeal are limited to procedural error or breach of procedural fairness.
- (38) Appeals will be managed through the Academic Appeals Committee and are to be made in accordance with the *Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy* and associated procedure.

Section 4 - Procedures

- (39) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Procedures.

Related documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with but is not limited to:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Procedure
- Admissions Policy and associated Procedure
- Fees Policy
- Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy and associated Procedure
- RPL Application Form

Related Legislation:

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF)
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) January 2013 (2nd Edition)
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code)

Document Administration

Policy Name	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy
Policy Owner	Dean
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Next Review #	Three years from the Approval Date
Amendment history	
Version 1:	RPL Policy and Procedure first developed and implemented March 2019 (new template and content reviewed to ensure compliance with HESF 2015, AQF and National Code). 2019 version archived, but content was revised and updated to reflect current practices and separate it into policy and procedure.
Version 2:	Updated Clause 25a to remove the reference to embedded programs. Added Clause 26 – students who have completed a standalone course or embedded course at ACPE will be granted 100% credit for equivalent units in a course.

Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the Review date